

REVIEWS

USAREUR's Desert Storm Account Lacks Objectivity, Lessons Learned

From the Fulda Gap to Kuwait: U.S. Army, Europe, and the Gulf War by Stephen P. Gehring, Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., 1998. 377 pages, maps, illustrations, tables, and appendixes. \$17.00.

While much has been written on the subject of the Gulf War, very little study has been devoted exclusively to USAREUR's (U.S. Army, Europe) involvement in the conflict. Stephen P. Gehring, the staff historian for USAREUR, attempts to provide this information in his new book, which serves as an echelon-above-corps look at USAREUR preparation, deployment, and redeployment for the Gulf War.

Gehring starts his history before the Iraqi invasion on 2 August 1990, beginning with the late 1980s arms reduction agreements and the drawdown of forces in the European Theater. He catalogues both the planning and execution used to cut back forces in order to meet treaty agreements, and later the so called "peace dividend" from the collapse of Communism. In the midst of this chaos, Gehring argues that senior USAREUR leaders, namely General Crosby E. Saint (the CINCUSAREUR), successfully restructured their forces to form more mobile, offensive units called "Capable Corps." This restructuring appears to be in line with the AirLand Battle concept espoused during the same time period. Gehring believes that this edict revolutionized USAREUR forces and made them able to execute their mission during the Gulf War.

In the midst of this drawdown, Iraq invaded Kuwait. Gehring lists and discusses USAREUR's participation in Desert Storm, focusing primarily on logistical support and deployment. He covers early involvement, such as piecemeal deployments (12th Aviation Brigade), deployment of individuals in required/shortage MOSs, deployment of reserve crews, supply shipments, and shipments of equipment (M1A1) drawn from war reserve to upgrade deploying CONUS units.

Gehring then covers the political grandstanding and discussions which led to the decision to give CENTCOM an offensive option by deployment of a USAREUR corps. The decision-making process to determine which units would deploy is explored, but not critically. Due to many conflicting requirements (post-drawdown end state in Europe, maintaining base security, attempting to keep unit integrity), units that deployed were often patched together and were not fortunate enough to have habitual training and working relationships.

Very little study is actually dedicated to the tactical operations during the ground war. A scant six pages are all the attention that is given to this subject. Instead, the author moves on to postwar redeployment operations. The complex issues of what equipment would be returned to Europe, what would stay in CENTCOM, and what would return to CONUS required extensive planning in order to meet another multitude of conflicting demands (treaty limitations in Europe, our allies' reluctance to allow permanent bases on their soil, and an overriding attempt to save money). He concludes the book with the programs intended to increase the morale of individual soldiers after their return (such as opening the Berchtesgaden resort).

I would not recommend this book, for several reasons. First and foremost, the book lacks any semblance of objectivity. The book completely supports USAREUR decisions, and shows the righteousness of USAREUR policies. At times, it almost sounded like propaganda. To make matters worse, there are almost no criticisms or discussions of mistakes that were made. It is a shame that in such a large operation as USAREUR's participation in Desert Storm, we cannot criticize ourselves to learn from our mistakes so that we will not make them again. If you are looking for an evenhanded or fair AAR, this is not it. Instead you will find what reads like a self-congratulatory press release from USAREUR.

Additionally, as previously noted, this book covers mostly subjects at echelons above corps. Very little time is dedicated to where the rubber meets the road, at battalion level and below, where soldiers and junior leaders make operations happen. The book discusses corps, divisions, and brigades, but rarely talks about individual battalions. The book is written at such a high level that, unless a reader is serving on a division or corps staff, very few relevant lessons can be gleaned from its pages.

Although not necessarily a fault, the book is somewhat deceptive in its title. Topics discussed are primarily the preparation, deployment, and redeployment. Actual combat involvement is not studied closely.

The book is not an easy read, as much of the presentation is dry and lifeless. The book is statistic-heavy with many charts and graphs, and lacks first person accounts of events. Adding some primary source material from actual soldiers and leaders who carried out the operation could have spiced up the book, but they are notably absent.

On the other hand, the book is well researched and prepared. It is obvious that extensive historical work went into gathering

and synthesizing information from that time period. Many archives, unit histories, and official documents have been dissected to provide data. The actual deployment order for USAREUR is included in the book as an appendix. The author has done a good job cataloging what actions must be accomplished for a large scale deployment, and number crunching exactly what USAREUR did to make the deployment happen.

Unfortunately, because of the large bias and lack of self-criticism, I cannot recommend this book. I feel that the author passed up a great opportunity to let the Army learn from any mistakes which happened during USAREUR's deployment. Instead, the book ignores any failures and only highlights the successes of the operation. This is not the way the Army should write its own history.

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Death Traps: The Survival of an American Armored Division in World War II by Belton Y. Cooper, forward by Stephen E. Ambrose; Presidio Press, 1998; 324 pp., \$28.95 (\$26.05 via Barnes and Noble); ISBN 0-89141-670-6.

Most armor aficionados have seen the movie "Kelly's Heroes," and the adventures of the anachronistic Oddball and his crew. One of the more memorable scenes in the movie finds Clint Eastwood, as Kelly, running into a relaxed Donald Sutherland who is "catching rays" while his crew feverishly works on the tank. Eastwood asks if he is going to help them. The answer? "No, man, I don't know what makes 'em work, I just ride in 'em."

The same cannot be said for Belton Cooper. Fifty-four years ago, as a lieutenant, Mr. Cooper served as an ordnance liaison officer with Combat Command B of the 3rd Armored Division during its combat in northern Europe. He got to see a good portion of France, Belgium, and Germany over the hood of a jeep tearing along rutted roads as he sought out damaged or broken-down tanks in need of repair. Since 3AD had bypassed many pockets of German troops, this was an incredibly hairy task, but one absolutely critical to the ability of the "Spearhead" division to do its job. As an alumnus of the 3rd, I eagerly awaited this book coming out since I heard of its release date last June, and the wait and the book have both been worth it.

The picture Mr. Cooper presents here is a very personal but very precise tale of the efforts needed to keep an armored division

moving in heavy combat. There has never been anything like it before or since, and the tale is of great worth to those who do not understand either the sacrifice of the past or the effort required to permit our predecessors to make that sacrifice. The tale which is told here is of one where it is not minutes of sheer terror, but day after day of fear, drudgery, and horror, overcome by determined men to make sure the tanks would roll forward.

Mr. Cooper is a very polished writer, and the book is very readable. But there is a certain quality of "you are there" many other memoirs do not seem to have. Part of it is the fact that there are a number of technical errors in it, but in the case of this book, they actually enhance the tale being told. These errors are not those of a man who has not done his research, but reflect the "rumor control" effect so many of us are familiar with, but in its 1944 version.

Case in point: the lack of a good, mobile, well-armed and well-armored tank. Mr. Cooper gives the field view of the stupidity and "branch blinder" mentality which held up 90mm-armed tanks, putting a sharp stick in the eye of the image of General Patton as he does so. But he writes that the M26's "Christie" suspension made it a much better tank. Elsewhere, he correctly notes that the Pershing had a torsion bar suspension, not a Christie suspension. (J. Walter Christie, an eccentric if there ever was one, created a long-travel coil spring suspension laid out at sharp angles inside a false hull. This did permit the tanks to go very fast over rough ground, but copyrights and lack of a perceived need caused the U.S. Army to purchase only seven Christie tanks. Christie sold his designs to Britain and Russia, where they influenced the suspensions on the T-34s, SU-85s and SU-100s, and the British Covenanters, Crusaders, and Cromwells. But Christie's design was not involved in the success of the M26.)

Cooper does provide some very interesting insights as to one of the classic "Gottterdammerung" pictures of WWII, the one that shows a German Panther burning in front of Cologne Cathedral. A 3AD M26 had picked it off with a shot on the move right after the German tank had just knocked out a Sherman. He includes four photographs from his own collection of the tank being knocked out, and the burned-out hull days later. He also provides the only known description of what he calls the "M26A1E2" or Super Pershing, better known formally as the T26E4. This tank, the only guaranteed Tiger II killer to ever be shipped to Europe, did actually fight one engagement, vaporizing an unknown German vehicle at 1500 meters (due to snipers, nobody wanted to go find out what it killed!)

Regardless of branch or interest, this book provides a very exciting, and in some cases moving, description of the background effort it took to permit units like 3AD to become the legendary formations of WWII. Nothing in recent times — ridge-running in Korea, firebases in Vietnam, or even the 100 Hours of Desert Storm — pressed the ingenuity and resolve of American troops and their support personnel like WWII. This book lays this out

better than any other recent effort, and should be part of the library of any contemporary warrior, be he "heavy" or "light."

The saying of "Amateurs talk tactics, professionals talk logistics" is personified in this book.

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The Changing Face of War: Learning from History edited by Allan D. English, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston, London, Buffalo, 1998, 293 pages, \$45.00 (Canadian), ISBN 0-7735-1723.

"Learning from history" is a challenge that most *ARMOR* readers must face at some point in their development as military professionals. "The Changing Face of War" is a collection of essays by Canadian army, air force and navy officers, the product of a course in war studies considering the impact of strategic ideas on the conduct of warfare.

With such a "joint" student body, it should be no surprise to find a range of results in their reports. Six papers deal with the evolution of strategy from the Napoleonic Wars to the present. Five studies are about unconventional warfare. Five additional pieces take the lessons of history into the 21st century.

The essay that perhaps is of most interest to the *ARMOR* community is titled, "The Myth of Manoeuvre Warfare: Attrition in Military History." The author's thesis is that "manoeuvre-based fighting...or other stratagems to making fighting less costly is something to be pursued at the tactical and operational levels. At the strategic level, he argues that attrition determines the outcome between roughly evenly matched opponents.

In view of the recent *ARMOR* article on Soviet tank design and the ongoing series on U.S. Cold War MBT development, "An Example of Force Development: Tukhachevsky and the Soviet Art of Deep Battle" is probably of topical interest to readers. The author of this piece, when he wrote it, was a member of the Canadian Forces' Force Development staff.

For those involved in preparing for SFOR, "Eliminating the Shadows: Applying Counterinsurgency Doctrine to Peacekeeping" may stimulate useful ideas. As a veteran of seven different United Nations missions, in my view this essay only serves as a start point.

While the title "Stealth Technology: A Revolution in Air Warfare" appears to address strategy primarily of interest to the air forces of the world, in fact the role of technology in changing the conduct of war, raised in this article, has to interest all those whose branches are based on technology.

This book provides a broad range of Canadian examples of attempts to learn from the history of military ideas in the strategic sphere. The contents serve as a source of inspiration

for readers facing the need to put pen to paper in their own personal struggles to understand the past and its meaning for the future of their profession.

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Fighting for the Soviet Motherland: Recollections from the Eastern Front by Dmitriy Loza, edited and translated by James F. Gebhardt. University of Nebraska Press, 1998. 271 pages. Cloth price: \$45.00. ISBN: 0-8032-2929-1

Fighting for the Soviet Motherland: Recollections from the Eastern Front is a first-hand account of the Great Patriotic War as lived and fought by a highly decorated Soviet tankerman, Colonel Dmitriy Loza. Colonel Loza is a Hero of the Soviet Union, the USSR's highest designation for bravery, and a witness to some of the harshest fighting on the Eastern Front. Drawing upon both his own experiences and those of comrades, Colonel Loza has fashioned a memoir that offers both value as an historical recollection as well as a digest of lessons applicable to today's armor soldiers.

Loza's description of mounted warfare is consistently gritty, hard-hitting, and absolutely convincing. He is clearly an expert at his craft, a professional officer who always notes with particular carefulness matters of life and death on the battlefield. In particular, anyone interested in the performance of Sherman tanks will enjoy Loza's commentary. He covers everything from ammunition stowage, to maintenance, to armor characteristics, to the vagaries of fighting the tank under a wide range of conditions.

Throughout, Loza writes with studied detachment, yet with the conviction that the Red Army was engaged in a noble fight against the Germans. Loza's tales of the imperatives of combat are thus boldly adopted and consider few subtleties regarding conduct by soldiers and units in war. This is nuts-and-bolts history; analysis is left to the reader. What conclusions Loza does draw are straightforward and pragmatic. He is most interested on the one hand in the comradeship and brutality that transpired before his eyes, and on the other, the performance of men and equipment that he encountered along the way.

Of special interest is Loza's discussion of the entire range of tactical military activities, not just combat scenarios. Loza fully covers numerous logistical matters: food preparation and delivery, maintenance procedures, the practices surrounding burial of the dead, promotions, and even the delivery of field mail. This is the kind of detail that can only come from a veteran who has experienced such combat, and is the strong suit of the book. Loza even discusses his experiences against the Japanese in 1945, an aspect of World

War II almost entirely overlooked by most accounts of the period.

While the book is replete with such insights, the reader is forced to search for them to the extent that the overall value of the work is diminished. The power of Loza's commentary is hindered by a poorly organized format. The book contains 31 separate sections, each which describes a vignette and is presented topically. There is no situational context provided for any of the sections. Loza merely begins with his reminiscences leaving the reader striving to understand the setting. While each section has a title, they are so vague as to be impossible to decipher without turning to that section and scanning the text. Any sense of chronological order is likewise absent. Back-to-back sections may discuss events years apart in time, only to return again later to the earlier period. The text does not even specifically state the units in which Loza served, although the reader can infer that these included the 233rd Tank Brigade and 46th Guards Tank Brigade. Furthermore, the maps that are included are not related in any way to the body of the text. While capably rendered, the reader almost encounters them by accident midway through the work. Had the translator and editor, James F. Gebhardt, provided more in the way of context, the utility of this book would have been greatly enhanced. As it is, the trauma and realism embedded within Loza's account risks being lost as mere trivia.

Military historians and modern-day tankers alike will appreciate the richly detailed accounts of ground combat included here, although one wishes the valuable information within the text was more accessible. Nonetheless, Colonel Loza's description of fighting on the Eastern Front ultimately constitutes a riveting story that communicates war as a desperate clash of machines and of men. In one section he discusses combat awards and offers what is a fitting summary to his memoir as a whole:

Every decoration of a frontline soldier represents a battle, sleepless days and nights, serious wounds or light ones. These decorations are reminders of those long-ago fiery years, of our youth that was tempered by war.

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The Minuteman: Restoring an Army of the People by Gary Hart, The Free Press, New York, 1998. 188 pages, notes, index. \$23.00, ISBN 0-684-83809-5.

In *The Minuteman: Restoring an Army of the People*, former Senator Gary Hart makes a controversial proposal to replace a large portion of the active force with a well-trained, civilian-based reserve. The benefits of establishing a "true militia," he argues, would include greater coordination and solidarity between the active and reserve components,

taming of the powerful military-industrial complex, and a reduced defense budget which would allow the attainment of the promised "peace dividend."

Drawing from his experiences as a former member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Hart claims that the current force structure is incapable of meeting America's security needs in the next century. It is too dependent on expensive, high-tech weapons, and is unable to deploy in a reasonable amount of time to hotspots around the globe. By organizing the active army into smaller, highly mobile units capable of undertaking decisive action, the United States would be able to quickly achieve its military goals. Additional forces, if needed, would be provided by the reserve components.

By increasing the role of the reserves, Hart claims that the National Command Authority would be less likely to commit American soldiers to troubled areas if the operation required the mobilization of the reserves. This, however, would require a major change in how American troops are currently utilized. In order to continue long-term commitments such as Bosnia, and recurring operations, such as Haiti and the MFO in the Sinai, reservists would have to be mobilized not only for the operation itself, but also for an intense train-up period. Although hundreds of reservists are currently deployed to such areas, the proposed cuts of the active army made by Hart would require a drastic increase in both the number of reservists activated for federal service and the length of time they are mobilized. Hart fails to address the economic and political ramifications of increasing the reliance on the reserve components for operations not directly relating to a national security threat.

Hart only touches the surface in addressing the historic animosity between the regular and reserve components. He too quickly dismisses Emory Upton's classic writings concerning the importance of a full-time, professional army, describing the nineteenth-century National Guard as a group of misunderstood, underutilized semi-professionals in search of guidance from their active counterparts. Not only did Upton analyze national military policy, but he was also instrumental in developing infantry tactics that utilized the principle of maneuver. Additionally, Upton proposed a system of military schools based on the German model and wrote the first definitive military history of the United States. Upton's writings, although skewed in areas, were not the *unsustained*, vindictive slurs against the National Guard as Hart suggests. They were based on the performance of citizen-soldiers during the Civil War. Furthermore, it was a "skeleton force" in true Uptonian fashion, not an army of citizen soldiers, which was able to absorb the millions of new troops at the outbreak of the Second World War.

Throughout the book, Hart illustrates several critical, albeit obvious, shortcomings in today's military. He addresses the need for more strategic air and sealift, warns us of the danger of "mission creep," and predicts that terrorism will be a major threat to our national

security. While these are important topics, the author contributes no original thought to them, and they distract the reader from the book's main point.

Despite serious shortcomings in historical research and the author's failure to provide the reader with a viable solution to identified problems, this extended essay is a worthwhile read. It will surely stimulate discussion concerning the future role of the reserve components, but it does not significantly contribute any new insight into that role. Therefore, a prospective reader should wait until next year to purchase it when the book appears on the reduced-price table.

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